

MITIGATION OR ACTION PLAN

Birch Creek Zone

The Birch Creek Zone is the furthest west zone in Clark County. This zone has 135,040 acres, with only 4,640 acres in private ownership. Birch Creek Valley lies between two rugged mountain ranges, the Lemhi Mountains on the west and Beaverhead Mountains on the east. The vegetation in the valley is sagebrush/bunchgrass community. The mountains have juniper and mahogany on the lower slopes with Douglas fir on the north facing slopes. The population in Birch Creek is very light in the winter but in the summer months there are about 120 people working and seeking recreation, especially along the valley bottom. Ranching and recreation are the main activities that are occurring in Birch Creek.

Other than Birch Creek, the only flowing stream in this zone is Pass Creek. Lone Pine Restaurant and Motel is the main gathering place. Since 1979, there have been 13 fires in this zone. Six fires being lightning caused and seven fires were man caused. The most recent large fire of 500 acres was the Bare Canyon Fire in 2000 and located in the Beaverhead Mountains. The City/County Fire Department response time to reach most areas in Birch Creek will be over 45 minutes.

Mitigation Plan:

1. Implement a fire prevention and education program that contacts businesses, residents and rural homeowners. This program would provide for fire risk evaluation of residences or businesses and provide a way to protect property for wildland fire. There is material now available for property owners to review and develop a safe zone around residences and other valued property. There are also other programs available for youth groups to visit areas and help them evaluate their property and provide suggestions on how to create safe zones around their homes and other structures. Materials are currently available from the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service. These materials could be provided in the summer of 2003. The youth fire risk evaluation program would be grant sponsored and could be requested for 2004.
2. Develop a county map of roads with names, numbers and signs so homes or businesses could be located for all emergencies including fires. Signs would be placed on the ground to guide emergency vehicles. A professional map service would be obtained to develop the map. After the map was developed, signs would be made and the signs would be installed on the ground. Contract for the map would be issued in 2003. The sign construction and ground installation would be done in 2004.
3. Provide adequate communications on fire incidents by providing radio and cell phones that use common frequencies and cell towers. Since Lone Pine Restaurant is the main gathering location for Birch Creek, consider having a radio or cell phone available for emergency response contact with Clark County Sheriff's Office. The acquisition of a radio or cell phone would be part of Dubois grant for

radios and cell phones obtained for the City/County Fire Department in the 2003 grant.

4. The City/County Volunteer Fire Department needs more volunteers to make the Department most effective. Giving proper training and compensation for training and for fire suppression may help encourage volunteers. The Spanish population has continued to grow in Dubois and many families own homes. Encouragement to all who live in the City to support the volunteers should be considered. This could begin immediately in 2003.
5. Future County development is done in a manner that protects homes from the threat of wildland fire. County Planning and Zoning should consider adopting the 30-foot set back clause for new homes being built and the wildland fire code for new construction. This would begin in 2003.
6. Burning permits have been available in Clark County for many years. The Dubois Ranger District has been issuing the permits for the State of Idaho. With the Sheriff's Office being designated as the Information Center, it would be the Sheriff's Office that would issue burning permits from May 10 through October 20. The Sheriff's Office would then notify the suppression forces stationed in Clark County of the burning permit issuance and its location. This would also include notifying the East Idaho Fire Dispatch located in Idaho Falls. This process would begin with the burning season on May 10, 2003. A handout would be made up by the County to pass out to all the homeowners and landowners in the County to remind them to obtain a burning permit. This handout will be prepared by the Wildland Fire Committee and reviewed and approved by the County Commissioners and sent out in May 2003.
7. With over 10,000 acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ground in Clark County, this type of fuel needs treatment to isolate it from other fuels in the same area. In Birch Creek there are about 637 acres of CRP land. Disking around the edges of CRP ground could separate this highly ignitable fuel from the rest of the area. Grazing could also be effective in reducing the fuels in the CRP system. Disking or grazing could begin in 2003 and continue for the length of the CPR agreement.
8. Develop a County Evacuation Plan. Clark County Emergency Services will work with all involved agencies to develop an Evacuation Plan. This will begin in 2003.
9. Providing the appropriate fire service resources to maintain an effective emergency response system to wildland fires will depend on the Federal Agencies and their fire budget for the coming year. Both Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service provide initial attack units at Dubois, with helicopter and additional forces nearby with present funding. The City/County Volunteer Fire Department is often the first to arrive on a wildland fire and need a brush truck similar to the engines the Forest Service uses. This type of fire engine would be much more efficient than rolling the larger fire trucks to wildland fires. Forest Service has one of these engines available for this coming season and would make it available to Clark County. Grants are available to transfer this type of brush truck and should be done the spring of 2003.

10. Explore the potential of making dead timber available as firewood for the general public in Federal fuel reduction programs. As a fuel reduction measure, support the Caribou-Targhee N.F. in making dead timber along forest roads available for firewood. This should begin in 2003 on the Dubois Ranger District.
11. Encourage hazard fuel treatment on Federal, State, and private lands adjacent to moderate and high-risk areas. The hazard fuel reduction treatments on Federal, State, and private lands will be prioritized each year. Since this priority list will have new projects added, they will be evaluated and prioritized each year.
(Appendix e)
12. Wildland conditions are continually changing in the County and the wildland committee should meet quarterly beginning October 2003 to review the plan and update where needed.

Wagoner's lower place
View is Northeast



Wagoner's Upper Place
10-17-02 View is Southeast



Lone Pine
View is North



Lone Pine
View is South

